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BEFORE THE
LABOR COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
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Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Laura Cummings and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's businesses, and the vast majority of our members are small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

I am testifying today in **opposition to HB 6556 An Act Concerning Sick Buildings.**

This bill seeks to make claims for illnesses related to working in a "sick building" compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act.

This is a very vague bill and several of the terms used are not clearly defined. This will potentially lead to a spike in workers' compensation claims brought under the new language.

As it is currently written, **HB 6556** does not call for a medical professional to causally relate a claimant's illness to exposure at work, just that a "significant number" of employees have the same symptoms.

The current language also does not define what a "significant number" of employees would be under the law.

Furthermore, the bill is unnecessary under the current Workers' Compensation Act. Under our present laws, occupational illnesses that are causally related to employment are compensable. This means employees do not gain additional coverage under the proposed amendments. Rather, **HB 6556** will make the burden of defense much more arduous for employers.

This bill presents an unnecessary added burden to Connecticut's employers. In a year in which our businesses have seen an average increase of 7% in their workers' compensation rates, this bill will surely become another cost driver.

For the aforementioned reasons, I urge that you **oppose HB 6556.**